



L-R: Chris Jones, CEO at C&G, Nicholas Rose, winner of the FE Learner and the Outstanding Achiever of the Year Award, Alex Jones, TV presenter Picture by Nick Linford

Unemployment not free for all

Confusion reigns over who should pay fees

FE Week Exclusive

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) say colleges are not allowed to fully-fund unemployed learners seeking work unless they are on state benefits.

The guidance contradicts earlier advice, as reported in *FE Week* (see picture, right).

A member of a popular college email forum has shared an exchange with Nick Chomyk, funding policy development and learner eligibility manager at the SFA (far right).

Mr Chomyk describes how his previous advice has now changed, and the original funding requirements "need to be followed."

Yet in September, Mr Chomyk had said to the forum member: "The individual does not have to be in receipt of a benefit, just unemployed and needs help to get back into work."

The advice from September was in line with policy updates communicated to SFA staff, the Association of Colleges (AoC) and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) in August 2011, which said any unemployed learner could be fully-funded provided they are looking for work.

The advice said: "It is recognised that this discretion is mainly for those in direct receipt of a state benefit, but could also apply to other individuals who are unemployed

and need skills training to help them enter work."

It later added: "Unemployed status and the need for skills training to help them enter work would be confirmed by the individual in the form of a self-declaration to the college or training organisation."

FE Week has asked the SFA why the September advice has changed.

A statement from the SFA said: "The Agency's policy on the funding of unemployed learners has been consistent throughout 2011/12 and is clearly set out in our funding documents, which are communicated to providers."

The college email forum member says the guidance around fee remission "has been very unclear."

"Having sought clarification I was surprised to be told the rules have been changed yet again," they said.

"Colleges and training providers will naturally be very confused as

to who should and should not be charged fees, and whether existing learners are no longer eligible for full funding".

The AoC say they expect the SFA to clarify the guidance later this year.

Julian Gravatt, AoC assistant chief executive, said: "There was some confusion in the summer of last year when guidance was published but then swiftly altered a few short weeks later."

"We understand there are plans at the SFA to clarify these rules and hopefully make

them easier to understand for everyone as early as this year."

He added: "For colleges, fees are a difficult issue and we are keen to provide support where we can."

"However there are times when fees are unavoidable."

"BIS and the SFA should be aware of occasions when charges must be applied for additional services, or to incentivise deadline meeting, which is normal in procedure as a way to encourage appropriate behaviour."



Email exchange

From: Nick Chomyk (SFA)
Sent: 02 February 2012 08:58
To: Forum member
Subject: RE: Funding Eligibility

Hi forum member

No. The rules in the Funding Requirements will need to be followed. However, where you have accepted learners on the basis of the advice below we will accept starts up to the end of December 2011. If you have had any starts based on the information below since then please let me know and I will advise.

Nick Chomyk
 Funding Systems Manager

From: Forum member
Sent: 02 February 2012 08:31
To: Nick Chomyk (SFA)
Subject: FW: Funding Eligibility

Hi Nick

Does the information you provided below still stand?

From: Nick Chomyk (SFA)
Sent: 02 September 2011 09:28
To: Forum member
Subject: RE: Funding Eligibility

The individual does not have to be in receipt of a benefit, just unemployed and needs help to get back into work. The Funding guidance will be updated in October.

Nick Chomyk
 Funding Systems Manager

Monday 19 March 2012
www.feweek.co.uk

Brian Lightman



FE Week spoke to The General Secretary of the ASCL

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CAMPAIGNS

Sign our e-petition calling time on the 16-18 apprenticeship rate reduction

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161-165 Greenwich High Road
London SE10 8JA
T: 020 8123 4778
E: news@feweek.co.uk

Lambeth College leaves 157 Group following inspection

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

A college will not renew membership to the 157 Group amid reports of an 'inadequate' Ofsted inspection.

Lambeth College, in London, revealed on Wednesday that it will no longer be part of the group as it planned to "focus on improving" its performance.

A spokesperson for the college said: "We will not be renewing our membership of the 157 Group as we are focussing on improving our performance internally."

"However we are grateful for the continuing support of all the members."

A report in the Streatham Guardian the following day suggests the improvements relate to the college's most recent inspection - with the newspaper claiming the college was given an 'inadequate' overall rating.

According to the newspaper, the college was judged to be failing in three out of six areas, including management and leadership, outcome for learners and capacity to improve. It was also given 'satisfactory' ratings for quality and diversity and quality of provision, and 'good' for safeguarding procedures.

The inspection report is due to be published at the end of the month and a spokesperson for the college said it was unable to comment until that time.

The newspaper also reports the college's new principal, Mark Silverman, said he was "looking forward" to taking the institution on a "positive journey of improvements", but dismissed accusations it was failing.

Mr Silverman took up his new appointment at the end of February after a career spanning almost 20 years in the sector.

When he joined Lambeth College, he said: "I am looking forward to working with staff,

learners, employers, governors and our many partners to ensure that the college achieves its full potential and becomes a truly outstanding provider of education, training and skills."

Lynne Sedgmore CBE, executive director of the 157 Group, said the organisation, which according to their website "represents large and successful colleges", has been advised that Lambeth College would not be renewing its membership.

She said: "We have the greatest respect for Lambeth College and its work. We fully understand that Lambeth College's top priority in the near future is to focus on improving its performance.

"We are keen to support the college in whatever way we can, reflecting our aim to promote development and improvement in the sector as a whole."

She added: "We wish the college's new principal, Mark Silverman, and his senior leadership team, teachers, support staff and governing body, every success."

Although the 157 Group lost one member last week, they have gained another in Liverpool Community College, one of the largest further education colleges in England.

It strengthens the group's ties in Merseyside and the North-West.

Mrs Sedgmore said: "Having established an excellent reputation for its strong community focus over the years, the college is working closely with employers to help students develop the skills that local businesses need, and increase the city's prosperity."

Elaine Bowker, principal at Liverpool Community College, said: "We look forward to being able to contribute to the 157 Group's national voice on further education policy; its efforts to improve the reputation of further education colleges; and its work to raise awareness of the extensive choice of vocational, academic and degree-level qualifications offered."

FE Week news in brief

Jobless youths up

Statistics show that youth unemployment has increased for another quarter.

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), in the three months to January 2012 there were 1.04 million unemployed 16 to 24-year-olds. This is up 16,000 from the three months to October 2011.

Excluding people in full-time education, there were 731,000 unemployed 16 to 24-year-olds in three months to January 2012, up 1,000 from three months to October 2011.

The ONS also say there were 3.60 million 16 to 24-year-olds in employment, down 32,000.

Credit opportunities

Plans to increase credit accumulation and transfer opportunities in further education are underway.

Working with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Association of Colleges (AoC), who manage the work, the Skills Funding Agency is seeking proposals for one-year pilot projects.

The emphasis should be on developing "a ladder of opportunity of comprehensive vocational education and training programmes".

Links to application specifications will be published on the Agency's website.

MCL applications

Guidance has been released on how to apply for exemptions to the £500,000 Minimum Contract Level (MCL)

The Skills Funding Agency has published a document to advise those affected by the MCL of the criterion which the chief executive will apply when considering applications and process for applying for an exemption.

Training organisations that are affected by the MCL for 2012/13 can apply for an extension for one year.

Applications must be returned to the Agency at the very latest by 5pm on May 1.

Principal supports no-notice inspections

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

The principal of a college which underwent the first no-notice inspection in FE has praised the piloted scheme.

Richard Atkins, the principal at Exeter College, believes the proposed style puts less pressure on staff compared to the current three week build up.

However, he believes that "serious consideration" needs to be given to employer responsive provision.

His comments come after Exeter College became the first to be assessed by Ofsted in a pilot of no-notice inspections.

The college said they were graded 'outstanding'; the best inspection profile of a college so far this academic year.

Meanwhile, inspectors graded teaching and learning as outstanding for the first time in an FE college in the last two years.

The pilot was revealed by the regulator's na-

tional director of learning and skills Matthew Coffey last week in his first comment piece for *FE Week*.

Mr Atkins told *FE Week*: "Our staff found the three week build up raises the temperature and makes the college less like a normal college. However, the inspectors saw Exeter College on a normal week. They simply had to take us as they found us."

He added: "However, there needs to be serious consideration about how they monitor employer responsive provision."

"If it's two miles down the road, we can make an appointment, but if it's 100 or 200 miles away, then it needs consideration."

Having asked to be involved in framework pilots last summer, Mr Atkins was eventually told the inspection could be between March and May. However, he was under strict instructions not to tell college staff.

Mr Atkins said: "Last summer when I knew there was likely to be a new framework, I suggested the college could be used in a pilot - not knowing there could be something coming

called no-notice inspections."

He added: "I received a call at 9.10am saying 'I'm on the way and I'll be at the college at 10am'. It was a very rigorous inspection. We were a bit nervous, but we're delighted with the outcome, particularly for teaching and learning, which has been a bit difficult to achieve over the last couple of years."

As well as teaching and learning, the college was graded 'outstanding' for student outcomes and for leadership and management.

Mr Atkins said: "This is an important national accolade for the staff and students of Exeter and the Heart of Devon and we are very proud the college has been tested under such stringent conditions as the first no-notice inspection in the country."

A spokesperson for Ofsted said the inspection result would not be formerly published as it took place as part of a pilot.

However, it will be used to inform the consultation process.

Ofsted's consultation, 'A good education for all', will close on May 3.

FE loans equality impact assessment delayed

Nick Summers

@SummersNicholas

The final impact assessment and equality impact assessment for the proposed FE loans system has been delayed by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

The reports, which were due to be published in April according to 'A Guide to Further Education Loans for colleges and training organisations', will not now be published until the end of May.

A BIS spokesperson told *FE Week*: "The impact assessment and the equality impact assessment will be published at the same time. We expect to publish both documents by the end of May 2012, in advance of regulations for the introduction of Level 3 and 4 post-24 loans being laid before Parliament. The publication is subject to the IA receiving the necessary approvals, including from the Regulatory Approvals Committee (RPC)."

The impact assessment will consider the effects of the new system in the 2013/14 and

2014/15 academic year.

The equality impact assessment, meanwhile, will look at how learners aged 25 and above will be affected by loans when studying courses at level 3 and 4 in "the foreseeable future".

Gordon Marsden MP, shadow minister for skills, FE and regional growth, has questioned how detailed both assessments will be.

Speaking to *FE Week*, Mr Marsden said: "Will it be a generalised impact assessment or will it be a proper, detailed equality impact assessment that looks at the particular issues at particular groups of people?

"Women in their thirties and forties, people from ethnic minorities and people with disabilities because these are, as I say, details of people most vulnerable to being put off in a situation where the optimum amount, a very generous amount of support, is suddenly lifted away and replaced by these FE loans."

Mr Marsden held an event at The Manchester College earlier this month to ask students, senior college leaders and representatives from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), the University and College Union

(UCU) and the Association of Colleges (AoC) how they felt about the proposed system.

Graham Beards, interim director of finance and estates at Oldham College, said the impact assessment and equality impact assessment would be "a case of wait and see".

Mr Beards said: "We are hoping the report will answer questions such as whether FE learners will be allowed to access maintenance loans as for higher education? And what does the government predict the impact to be on the total number of 25+ learners?"

The shadow skills minister says there are increasing concerns in the sector about both the principle of a loans system and the timescale of implementation.

Mr Marsden said: "The modelling which has thus far been done on it has been inadequate. If you think about other major changes that are introduced, they're often introduced over a two or three year period and with pilots. This is something that they are suggesting as a big bang principle."

Sally Hunt, general secretary of the UCU, said the government's proposals had been

"steamrollered through" without sufficient consultation with the sector.

"It is crazy to hike up the cost of college courses during a time of record unemployment. We should be making access to education easier for determined adults who want to get off the dole queue and on in life," she said.

The National Union of Students (NUS) has formed a campaigning coalition with UCU, the Institute for Learning (IfL), AoC, the 157 Group and Gordon Marsden MP against the introduction of the FE loans system.

Toni Pearce, vice president (FE) for the NUS, says they hope to launch the campaign in the next couple of weeks with a student survey and briefings for MPs.

"One of the biggest tasks with the campaign is informing the public, students, MPs and even the FE sector to educate them about what is happening, because it's such a complicated issue," she said.

"I hope that those people who engage with the campaign will lobby their MPs, because once the issue is explained, it's almost entirely unjustifiable."

SFA auditors assigned to A4e

Nick Reinis

@fenickr

Auditors at the Skills Funding Agency have been assigned to help A4e carry out a review of some of its government contracts.

The internal audit, led by law firm White & Case LLP, will investigate all contracts A4e has with the Agency.

According to 2011/12 allocations data on the Agency's website, A4e has contracts totalling more than £16 million with them.

The audit also follows news that A4e has been selected by the Agency as a preferred bidder for two prison education contracts - in London and East of England.

A4e has been in the public eye over the last month following allegations of fraud. Its owner, Emma Harrison, stepped down from the firm and her position as 'families tsar' for David Cameron last month.

A statement from the Agency read: "The Agency takes allegations of financial irregularity very seriously.

"The Agency, as part of their standard processes, continues to receive assurances from A4e to ensure that public funding is being used and protected appropriately both for current contracting arrangements or any future contracts."

It also added: "The Agency has decided that Agency auditors will work alongside A4e's auditors to complete this exercise and provide additional assurance to the Agency that contracts are being delivered in accordance with our requirements.

"In the current context the Skills Funding Agency is vigilant and continues to monitor the situation very closely."

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), which pays millions of pounds to A4e to deliver work programme contracts, has launched its own investigation.

A spokesperson for the DWP said: "We have

made it absolutely clear to A4e that we take this matter very seriously, and that if at any point during the audit or thereafter we find evidence of systemic fraud in DWP's contracts with A4e we will not hesitate to immediately terminate our commercial relationship."

The A4e board said: "The Board has made consistently clear in all previous statements that we take any allegations of fraudulent or otherwise illegal activity extremely seriously. There is absolutely no place for this type of misconduct at A4e."

"We obviously acknowledge concerns raised by DWP and we welcome and will cooperate fully with their planned investigations."

The preferred bidders for prison education were revealed by the Agency last week. It comes after an "open and competitive procurement process" by the Agency with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to reprocure Offender Learning and Skills Services (OLASS) from August 1.

As well as A4e, preferred bidders include Milton Keynes College (East Midlands and South Central), Manchester College (North-East and North-West, and Yorkshire and Humber) and Weston College (South-West). Preferred bidders for Kent and Suffolk are yet to be decided.

The Agency expect to finalise contractual agreements by early summer.

"During the next stage, we will work with preferred bidders to ensure that the information provided during the procurement process remains valid and that their organisations are able to meet all the requirements of the service, prior to concluding the procurement," said the Agency statement.

Once contracts are signed, the Agency will apply "robust contract management processes" which will enable "continued assurance" public funding is used and protected appropriately.

The Agency are prioritising "quality of provision" and "local responsiveness" by giving offenders basic English and maths and support to help them back into employment once released.

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FE Week investigates

Gazelle group says FE colleges need to change

Nick Summers
@SummersNicholas

Further education (FE) colleges need a "complete transformation" if they are to prepare young people for the world of work, according to the Gazelle group.

A new report, entitled 'Enterprising Futures: The changing landscape and new possibilities for further education', says colleges need to move away from classroom based teaching and recognise the importance of work-based practice and experience.

Fintan Donohue, principal of North Hertfordshire College and a member of the Gazelle Principals Group, told *FE Week*: "Colleges need to bring work and learning much more closely together."

"What a number of colleges are doing and in fact increasingly will need to do is create businesses and enterprises within the colleges themselves."

"Many of us have started to do that so that our students, who aren't getting the opportunities that they need to develop those enterprising, entrepreneurial creative skills, can actually develop them in genuinely real working, commercial settings."

The report says the current FE system has fostered an obsession with "bureaucratized performance criteria" such as student enrolments and qualification completions, restricting the opportunities for innovation.

Leonard A. Schlesinger, president of Babson College based in America, said in the foreword of the Gazelle report: "The traditional model of further education will not, unchanged, prepare people for workplace success."

"There are major gaps in the needs of employers and the skills acquired by workers."

"In an environment where people are likely to have a succession of jobs during their lives, society needs to reconceptualize what it means to have a career and shift the orientation to individuals making investments in their own skills and capabilities."

The report, launched at the Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2012 event held in Liverpool last week, says FE colleges are failing to provide a "dynamic, experiential learning environment" needed by students to compete in the job market.

It later argues that students need the personal qualities of "enterprise, networking and creativity" alongside the technical skills delivered by conventional qualifications.

The report states: "What we need for tomorrow's worlds of work are people with more than vocational skills and qualifications (which often reflect a narrow and reductionist view of employment needs), who can demonstrate a broad portfolio of personal and professional capabilities to engage effectively with others to create value."

The report, prepared by PA Consulting, says the success of FE colleges will depend on them adopting the same 'disruptive innovation' in teaching which is currently shaping the world of work.

Teresa Frith, skills policy manager at the Association of Colleges (AoC), has welcomed the document but says the response from colleges is likely to be varied.

"I think it's stimulates the debate and I think it's hard to argue against a lot of the logic that sits behind the report," she told *FE Week*.

"It's always healthy to challenge yourself and the way that you do things."

"New principals will come in and ask the question 'well why?' to staff - well because I think it's important to not get set into a 'well we've always done it this way' mentality."

The Gazelle report says the vocational skills found in college-based-courses and qualifications has remained unchallenged in FE for "decades", and looks increasingly outdated within the modern job market.

The report states: "Qualifications provide, at best an indication of the aptitudes, application and intelligence of potential recruits, but they offer insufficient guidance as to the potential performance of an individual 'on the job'."

The report also says employers shouldn't

GAZELLE

Enterprising Futures:

The changing landscape and new possibilities for further education

Gazelle Global

March 2012

as creating 'real world' environments where students can test their skills with working clients and supply chains.

The 'daisy wheel' framework also advises colleges to create business incubators where students can test their own ideas in a protected and reflective environment.

The Gazelle report admits there is "only a limited economic market" for FE colleges to deliver entrepreneurial learning at the moment, and says colleges should be looking for funding outside of the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

It states: "The investments and revenues needed to sustain entrepreneurial learning are not provided through the current FE system."

"Colleges and other providers looking to develop and deliver new models of learning must find alternative ways of securing the resources to create a viable business proposition."

The Financial Times published an article about the report with the headline "Heads claim college system is 'obsolete'" last week.

Dick Palmer, principal of City College Norwich (CCN) and member of the Gazelle Principals Group, said the headline was taken "out of context".

Mr Palmer, responding to Nick Linford, managing editor of *FE Week* on Twitter, said: "Nick like much media 'out of context'."

"It's a great report which does challenge but also says FE can do."

Mr Donohue added: "The word obsolete doesn't appear within the report."

"When the others (PA Consulting) were first writing the report and were testing it with us and talking it through with us, as we were trying to wrestle with the ideas and the thinking in it, they did at one point use the word obsolete."

"All of the principals said that didn't describe the FE sector we work in here and now."

"Which is why as you'll see when you read the report, you won't find any reference to that in the report itself."

For more reaction see expert piece on page 7.



Gazelle group members with Richard Branson at the Global Entrepreneurship Congress 2012

FE Week profile

Brian Lightman ~ his story

Janet Murray

@Jan_Murray

The General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders talks to FE Week

Brian Lightman never had any political ambitions. In fact, if someone had told him he would end up as the head of a trade union, he'd probably have laughed, he says.

Now in his second year as general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), he regularly rubs shoulders with policy makers, union officials and government types and couldn't imagine doing anything else.

Lightman came to the role in 2010, with 30 years teaching experience and two headships under his belt.

Educated at the Westminster City School (a selective boys' school in London) and Southampton University, he developed an interest in teaching after spending his gap year working in a residential special school.

But when he qualified as a languages teacher in 1979, perceptions of the teaching profession were at an all-time low.

He recalls: "People said to me things like, 'Why don't you get a better job? You've got a degree, you could go and do something better than teaching.' That actually bolstered my resolve. I've always believed - and I still believe - that teaching is such an important job that it needs people, good graduates who are committed to doing it."

What inspired him to go into the profession - and still drives him now - is his passion for giving young people the best opportunities in life. "I like working with young people - I think they are tremendously energetic and funny," he says.

"Over the years, I have seen children who have faced incredible challenges in their personal lives and their domestic circumstances and yet have managed to achieve great things. That gives you a tremendous sense of achievement..."

And while there was no "great career plan," Lightman worked his way through the ranks, becoming a head teacher at just 39.

His involvement with the ASCL (then known as the School Heads Association) came almost by chance, when he was invited to stand in for a member of the national council for a few months.

He went on to be a local branch secretary, national council treasurer, ASCL president for Wales and vice president for England, which he did for three years.

Had it not been for that period, when he was effectively shadowing the general secretary at the time John Dunford, who he says was a "fantastic mentor", taking on the big job could have been daunting.

But he admits he couldn't have stepped into the role at a more difficult time - less than six months after the coalition government came to power and with the threat of a pension dispute over government plans to scrap the final salary scheme and raise the retirement age just around the corner. It was the closest the ASCL has ever come to industrial action, says Lightman.

"I am very pleased that we were able to avoid it and move on to be able to bring the pensions dispute to some sort of conclusion," he says. "But it has been very frustrating and I still think that the changes the government are going to impose, regardless of what anybody says, are potentially very detrimental to the well-being of our service."

While he has never worked in further education, as a headteacher, Lightman worked closely with local FE and sixth form colleges.

He thinks the biggest challenge facing the sector at the moment is dealing with cuts, particularly entitlement to funding, which covers the cost of pastoral care, tutorials and extracurricular activities for 16- to 19-year-olds and the education maintenance allowance (EMA).

The replacement bursary fund for the EMA does not stretch far enough, he says, recalling a recent visit to a sixth form college in a rural area, where some students were having to travel a considerable distance to get into college each day.

"They [staff] were really fearful that some of the students...would not be able to carry on coming in because the bursary didn't cover all their travel costs," he says.

"I never have any difficulty getting access to almost anybody, from the most senior officials, ministers, secretary of state, chief inspector, I mean, all these sorts of people..."

And while he is pleased that some colleges are trying to make up the shortfall - in some cases offering free bus passes or meal subsidies - they shouldn't have to do this as a "marketing tool" to get students to enrol on courses, he says.

Lightman is also concerned by Ofsted's growing interest in FE, particularly plans to downgrade colleges or training providers that get two grade 3 inspections to 'inadequate.'

"If you compare FE with schools, they have certainly had more autonomy and more freedom to genuinely set their own vision, shape their own destiny, and be quite entrepreneurial."



"I think they have been a little bit less threatened by the sort of pressure that schools have had from Ofsted," he says.

But he would hate to see colleges getting the same kind of heavy-handed treatment from Ofsted schools have become accustomed to. "If we are serious about improving our education service, then really we need to be able to have a professional dialogue with regulators and inspectors...an open dialogue which says, 'Look, this is going well but this is not going so well and we would like to try x, y, z to improve it. Do you think we're right or can you help us?'"

Also worrying him is the government's new National Careers Service, due to be rolled out next month, which will give schools and colleges responsibility for providing independent careers advice and guidance for their students.

But with the launch just weeks away, the DfE is yet to produce statutory guidance for schools that explains how they might go about this.

The ASCL is pushing hard for face-to-face advice to be included in the guidance, but Lightman's fear - shared with many in the sector - is that many young people will end up sitting in front of computer screens, instead of qualified, experienced advisers.

Since he took on the role of general secretary, Lightman's life has changed, almost beyond recognition.

And while he jokes that he has a few more grey hairs than he did 18 months ago, he relishes the opportunity to influence and access some of the most prominent people in the world of education.

"I never have any difficulty getting access to almost anybody, from the most senior officials, ministers, secretary of state, chief inspector, I mean, all these sorts of people... whether or not we agree on things, it's very important," he says.

But living out of a suitcase has taken some getting used to.

While he has a flat in Leicester, where the ASCL is based, most weeks he is travelling around the country to attend meetings and conferences, which can be tiring.

And the buffet lunches and canapés have also taken their toll - so much so, he reveals, he is currently on a diet.

Now 56, Lightman says he has every intention of working until he is 65, but says he can't see himself going onto a "substantive, full-time job" after his current role.

Graduate retirement is better, he says. But he is clear on one thing. "I won't go on for a day longer than I feel I am doing a good job because I don't think that would be a service to anybody."

"When I or anybody else begins to notice that I am running out of steam, that will be the time to go."

FE Week Experts

Are UK apprenticeships facing an identity crisis?



Apprenticeships have long been regarded as a useful way to grow young talent with a mix of on-the-job training and traditional classroom learning.

But as the UK apprenticeship programme becomes more extensive to cover a wider subject matter, the flagship youth training scheme is now facing something of an identity crisis with business owners in certain sectors voicing concern at the effectiveness of some of the shorter training schemes.

This was the warning made by the Forum at the recent Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) Select Committee's inquiry into apprenticeships at the House of Commons.

In its submission to the official inquiry, the Forum argued central government could and should be more effective in overcoming the lack of clarity over information about apprenticeships, but said it entirely agreed with the scheme's expansion.

Shorter apprenticeship courses have recently come under fire from UK business owners, particularly those in traditional industries such as manufacturing and engineering, where the argument has been made that such courses do not provide the same value as the longer schemes they run - despite evidence of their popularity among more service-orientated sectors including retail.

It is, of course, important that shorter apprenticeships are more than simply glorified training schemes which cost businesses a substantial amount of cash, but provide very little in substance for students. There should also be care taken against diluting courses so they fall below industry standards.

Providing these schemes are accredited, shown to address real skills needs, and are well regarded, even as 'entry level' appren-

ticeships, they should rightly be valued, protected and promoted.

There should be more awareness of the differences between intense, four-year apprenticeships and shorter schemes, with greater clarity about their applicability to businesses in different industries. There should also be more centralised information about where to source information, funding and the types of courses being offered.

With resources scarce for small firms there is a need for better information and greater, more detailed feedback on the effectiveness of courses to ensure quality control is delivered. This could be closer interaction between training providers and local businesses – this is something long championed by the Forum.

It's not all bad news though for apprenticeships, with progress made by the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), particularly its commitment to advertise a firm's apprenticeship position within one month.

NAS have also pledged to place an apprentice within three months, and remove any health and safety requirements that go beyond national standards.

This type of red tape is something the Forum says has traditionally turned a lot of firms off from subscribing to apprenticeship schemes.

Earlier this year, the Forum marked National Apprenticeship Week by urging the government to simplify the entire apprenticeship system in order to make them more business-friendly and appealing to industry leaders.

It said training courses such as apprenticeships need to be seen as more worthy by industry, and urged decision-makers to incentivise small businesses to take on young people and reward those that do; to work more closely with employers on delivering training provision in terms of local need; and to simplify other aspects of these types of training schemes.

The Forum also suggested closer co-operation between business and education providers to allow a more tailored approach to local skill needs.

A more proactive approach in reaching out to businesses would better shape the schemes being offered, and training providers must work with small businesses to better understand the needs of the local community and create courses which reflect the job opportunities in the labour market.

Robert Downes, Policy Advisor for Forum of Private Business

Creating space for CPD that makes a difference

Nobody stays at the level of expert teacher or trainer without continuing appropriate and focused professional development throughout their working lives. Teachers and trainers in further education (FE) and skills need to keep a record of their continuing professional development (CPD) and declare the number of hours spent every year and the type of development undertaken to their employer and to their professional body, the Institute for Learning (IfL).

Every year, IfL carries out a random in-depth sample to identify effective practice in CPD and shares the findings with the sector. Our latest review, which covered the year to October 31, adopted a collaborative, discursive strategy to facilitate discussions on the reviewing, sharing and impact of CPD. IfL members representing all parts of the sector took part in 33 regional and local focus group meetings around the country.

It is interesting to see how closely IfL members' preferred teaching and learning strategies mirror the findings of research into effective education for adults and young learners. John Hattie, who has conducted extensive research over the past 15 years, stresses the need for professional communities: "space for teachers to interpret the evidence about their effect on each student ..."

This was borne out by the findings of our review: that directed CPD is not necessarily effective and more space is needed for self-directed and collaborative development opportunities.

IfL members were very clear about the type of CPD that does not work: top-down, prescriptive and generic training sessions and events.

The culture and management practices in a college or provider can promote or hamper professional learning that leads to excellent teaching and training practice.

This was the subject of a seminar we hosted with the 157 Group and the Institute of Education (IoE) for FE leaders and practitioners to discuss the leadership and creation of "expansive learning environments" to maximise professional learning and excellence in the FE sector.

We talked about self-directed and collaborative professional development that is integrated into normal working routines leading to the most meaningful impact on teaching practice, and agreed that provider organisations need to create more expansive learning environments for their teachers and trainers.

Lorna Unwin, professor of vocational education at the IoE, spoke of the central importance of leading learning in workplaces. She



argued that expansive learning is creative and dynamic and constantly evolving, not confined by artificial workplace boundaries. Workplace learning cannot be expansive or restrictive on its own; it sits within the wider organisational context and is the product of the organisational structures and cultures of which it is part.

A key characteristic of an expansive learning environment is the belief that people at all levels across the organisation possess valuable skills and knowledge and have the capacity to learn, and that learning leads to more effective performance.

We heard how Birmingham Metropolitan College is establishing professional development centres on each campus, where teachers can reflect on and share their professional practice.

It has also set aside every Wednesday afternoon for collaborative professional development, and teachers drive the priorities for using this free space to create powerful team and cross team professional development.

IfL is working with other sector agencies, including the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), JISC and others, to ensure that teachers and trainers in FE and skills have access to CPD that helps them stay up to date in teaching methods and technological innovations, for the benefit of their learners.

While many employers over manage and structure CPD for teachers and trainers, others are showing how expansive learning environments enable highly effective development, which leads to brilliant teaching practice and better outcomes for learners.

Dr Jean Kelly, Director of Professional Development at Institute for Learning

FE Week Experts

What do we cut and what do we keep?



What does it cost to open a 14-19 University Technical College? If you are Lord Baker, it's upwards of £20m. If you are from Cleveland and Redcar College you get the same for £30,000 - the research grant they won from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service that multiplied into support from local business and industry.

Let's make another funding comparison. Accolades were rightly awarded to John Hayes, FE and skills minister, for wresting £210m from the Treasury for adult

safeguarded learning. But local authority advisers I spoke to when researching an essay for the Parliamentary Skills Group book, *Open to Ideas*, pointed out that it was nothing compared with the £600m for free schools, over which they have no say despite the impact on local education provision.

And what do free schools bring? We have Eton launching a free sixth-form in Newham where there is already an FE college, a sixth-form college and school sixth forms, all judged by Ofsted as "good" to "outstanding". The new providers suggest there is a shortage of good "academic" sixth-form places. They would not say this had they consulted those on the ground.

Daily Express journalist Toby Young and the head teacher Katherine Birbalsingh both plan new academically elitist schools where there will be no skills teaching under the age of 16. Despite the fact that overwhelming evidence points to such a curriculum as incomplete, they are setting up these establishments as free schools with the blessing of Education Secretary Michael Gove.

The language Young and Birbalsingh use in the media denigrates skills learning as second-rate, and casts people who pursue it as "rude mechanicals". College managers have already spoken to me of the negative impact such moves are having on young people and especially those hoping to be apprentices. Everyone at a Parliamentary Skills Group

seminar, *What to Cut and What to Keep*, was of a like mind - stop seeking so-called parity of esteem between academic and vocational learning and, instead, imbue a lifelong love of skill and craft in all, whether for work or pleasure, from the earliest possible age.

"With numbers of NEETs now topping a million, there is much heart-searching over how to tackle this intransigent problem"

The word "lifelong" is the key here. With numbers of NEETs now topping a million, there is much heart-searching over how to tackle this intransigent problem. As a result, "schemes" such as the Work Programme are tacked onto the system with mixed outcomes, which at best fall well short of desired targets, as all such schemes have shown for decades.

But a NIACE-sponsored two-year inquiry into the future of lifelong learning suggested a more radical solution. Considerable national and international evidence was brought to bear, which showed that a greater concentration of resources on adults created strong role models and had a disproportionately positive effect

in encouraging the young to remain in education and training.

It may seem counter-intuitive, but the inquiry report in September 2009 called for redistribution £1 billion from under-25s to the over-50s. Given demographic changes it could be managed, despite the recession, with no cuts in real terms to per capita spending on the young. Provision would also more directly reflect spending on lifelong learning in countries higher than the UK in the OECD success ratings, such as Norway.

Whether such a policy ever stood a chance of being tested is a moot point; Gove would never wear it. Despite the Departments for Education and Business, Innovation and Skills sharing a minister, there appears to be little synergy and a lot of waste.

It seems as if they don't listen to each other. When I mentioned this at the seminar, there were firm nods and comments in concurrence from college and business representatives.

From its outset, the Coalition government promised a seamless and truly lifelong education service with necessary skills at its heart. With further cuts looming, have we achieved the fiscal sustainability across all departments we desire? If not, what do we cut and what do we keep?

Ian Nash is a partner in Nash&Jones Partnership of journalists and media consultants

Gazelle biting off more than they can chew?

It's obvious why the latest group to seek to 'transform' FE (mere 'change' is so last century) should want to call itself the 'Gazelle Group'. Gazelles are slim and pretty; the group's supporters even claim that they are agile, though I've never seen one climb a tree. They are fleet of foot, tread lightly on the earth, and are always alert.

This conveniently ignores the fact that in the great scheme of things the main role of gazelles is to help turn grass into hyenas. They fill the same niche between herb and hunter that the lemming does in colder climates, and though 'the lemming league' would have less of a ring to it, it's no less appropriate. Lemmings are arguably more agile but, like gazelles, are first and foremost prey.

The antelopes, however, do have one feature that resonates with FE: they engage in 'pronking'. For those not familiar with the term it means that when danger approaches, instead of running away they repeatedly leap stiff legged into the air.

Spending a lot of energy going nowhere does not seem a wise move but the aim apparently is to say to the predator 'Look at me. I'm tough.'

Eat someone else'. There is always a lot of pronking in the FE sector.

The aim of the Gazelle Group is to promote enterprise. The underpinning rationale is that young people can no longer rely on being employed by large organisations and instead need to prepare themselves to create their own future. They need to show initiative, creativity and entrepreneurial skills. They need to be good at networking and on occasion prepared to take risks. They need, in the vernacular, to 'look out for themselves'.

To a large extent this is wise and not particularly novel advice. Those who show initiative have always done better than those who wait for things to be handed to them on a plate. Those who are excited by a challenge have always done better than those who are fearful of change. Imagination and creativity are important alongside technical skills.

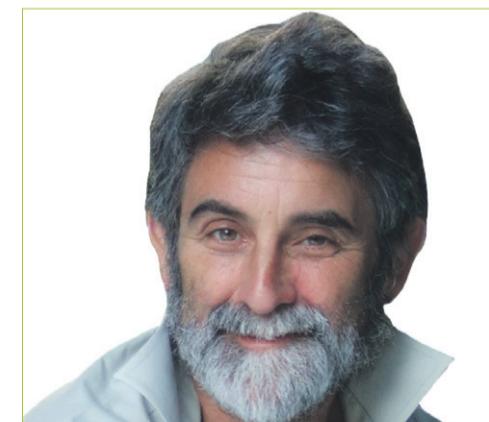
Furthermore it is good to stress that learning in colleges should be active, should engage and excite students through project work and give opportunities for team working. Just repeating classes in English and maths, important as they are, is not going to motivate many.

There are, however, serious dangers if the idea of entrepreneurship is taken to extremes, as so many ideas are these days. Here are the top three.

First, the reality is that very few young people will become self-employed, particularly in the early stages of their careers. The proportion of the workforce that is self-employed is small, and even that number is inflated by those who pretend not to be employees for tax purposes, as well as those odd jobbing to pad out a pension. Suggesting to young people that they can all be the next Richard Branson risks setting up thousands to fail.

Secondly, the idea that advanced economies are characterised by heroic individual entrepreneurs is a romantic myth. As Ha-Joon Chang, author of "20 things they don't tell you about capitalism" convincingly shows, many developing countries have enterprising individuals in abundance and it does them no good at all. Economic performance is primarily driven by complex and sophisticated systems of finance, stable institutional frameworks and the rule of law.

Most importantly, however, a focus on



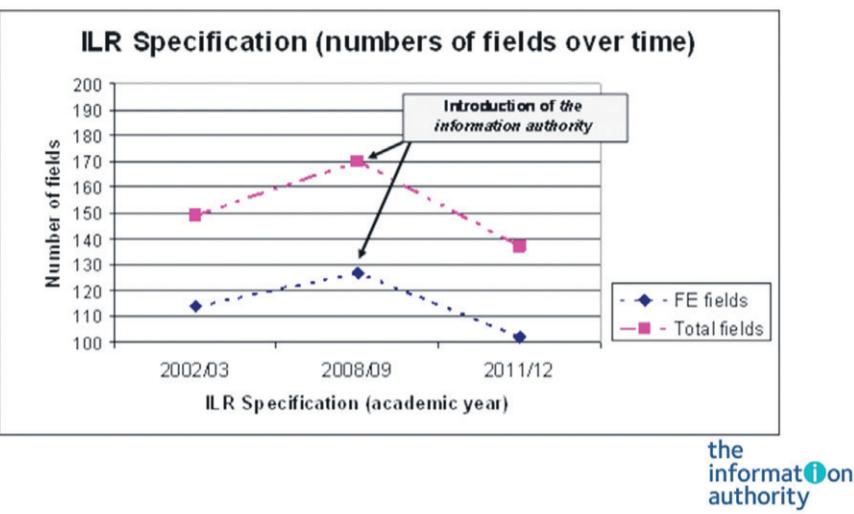
entrepreneurship risks transferring responsibility for unemployment from failed institutional arrangements to the young people themselves. They can be made to believe that they are out of work, not because of misguided economic policy, but because they are not enterprising enough. This, of course, will suit the predators in our system who offer interns the 'opportunity' to work for nothing and see the answer to poverty as 'getting on your bike'. FE ought to offer a more sophisticated narrative.

Mick Fletcher is a Further Education Consultant

FE Week gets technical

The Lsect Spring College Data Conference took place last week, chaired by the Managing Director, Nick Linford. *FE Week* brings you a selection of the slides from the presentations on the day. For more on the event see pages 10 & 11.

Field Reduction



Approach for 2013/14

- identify a core ILR based on a set of criteria
- core ILR acts as the starting point for change requests for 2013/14 instead of using the 2012/13 ILR as the basis of the specification
- approach agreed by the *information authority* board at its meeting on 07 March
- all “non-core” data must be requested with a supporting business case
- requests assessed against published criteria

the information authority

3. Data Collections Transformation (2)



OLDC

- SharePoint 2010 – improve provider experience
- Improve flexibility using OPA and file processing performance
- Migrate from Oracle to SQL
- Removing POL

PIMS

- Microsoft Dynamics 2011
- Data structure
- Rationalisation of interfaces

LARA

- Microsoft Dynamics 2011 upgrade

Data Collections Transformation

3. Data Collections Transformation (3)



LIS

- Core functions retained (e.g. validate ILR data, calculate funding, derived variables and reports)
- Re-architecture, replacing existing technology
- Modular design approach
- Web services
- Enhanced user interface
- Improved amalgamation functionality
- Integrate POL features with migration facility?

Challenges



- Level of ULN administration must reduce
- Reduce the number of possible matches and increase the number of exact matches
- ULN needs to be available within schools through MI Systems
- Learners must know their ULN at school
- Colleges and learning providers should collect the ULN from learners in future
- Agency & Awarding Organisations reaching agreement to share award data in almost real-time

Overall improvements



- New look and feel displayed consistently across Learner Management
- When Finding by ULN, an exact match returns the View Learner Profile screen
- When registering a new learner, an exact match returns the Register Learner – details screen
- Ability to search again within Results screen
- Progress bars are displayed when submitting batches
- Easier and improved navigation – consistent breadcrumb trail and removal of ‘holding page’

RSM Tenon

What to expect in 2011/12 funding audits

New areas that need to be considered:

- Discretionary fee waiver – Employment status
- Fee waivers in general – Fully funded
- Access to HE
- Embedded unlisted learning aims
- Summer Schools provision
- Sub-contracting

RSM Tenon

Other issues on the radar

Apprenticeships

- Length of Apprenticeship
- Who employs the Apprentice
- Fixed term contracts vs. duration of Apprenticeship
- Qualifications vs. Prior Attainment

Sub-contractors

- Due diligence
- Spot visits
- Asking the right questions

Ofsted

Annual Risk Assessment:

Purpose:

- inform the annual scheduling process
- ensure that all providers are constantly monitored
- focus Ofsted inspection resources on weaker providers and to balance the list of providers who become 'due'

Tools: (stated in the handbook)

- provider's previous inspection record; self-assessment, performance data (including trends over the last three years); and any information on significant changes in leadership, the provision offer and learner numbers
- Mixture of automated analysis and HMI desk based review

Ofsted

Other - data issues:

Apprenticeship QSR

- Inspectors aware of Data Service intention to stop in-year reporting except for period 10
- Apprenticeship NSRT to be published – April 12

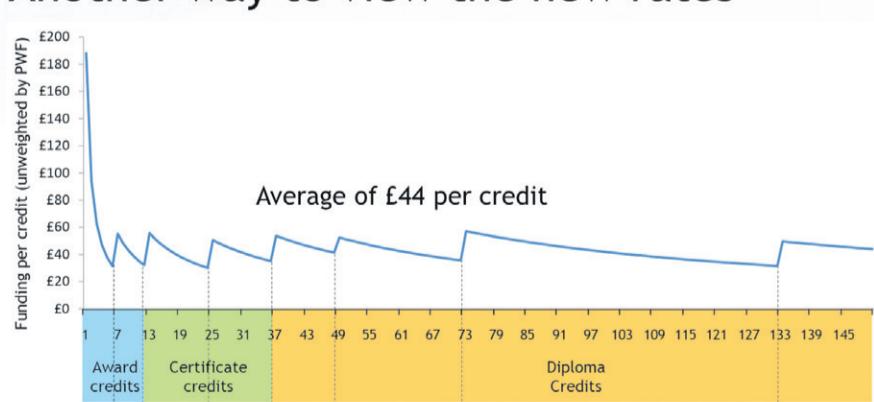
Minimum Contract Level

- Difficulties obtaining accurate subcontracting data

Sustainable employment (outcome)

- Ofsted committed to using robust progression data when available

Another way to view the new rates



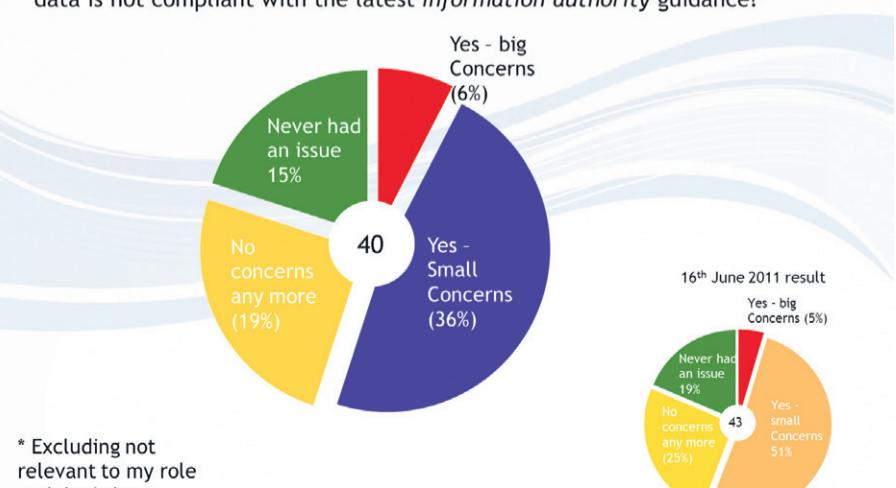
A nice 'outlier' spotted by Stephen Hewitt

Level	Old	SLN GLH	SLN	PW	NFR	Rate
60002736	Diploma in Meteorological Observing	54	0.12	1.12	£2,615	£351

Level	New	Credits	Rate	Rate	+ / -	+ / -
60002736	Diploma in Meteorological Observing	66	Diploma (49-72)	£2,573	£2,222	632%

Pre-conference online survey

Do you have any concerns that your current recording of success rate data is not compliant with the latest *information authority* guidance?



16th June 2011 result

Category	Percentage
Yes - big concerns	5%
Never had an issue	1%
No concerns any more	25%
Yes - small concerns	51%

FE Week events...

Tough love at the Lsect Spring Data Conference

Nick Summers**@summersnicholas**

Subcontracting arrangements are worrying Ofsted "big time", according to Mike Davis HMI, the regulator's principal officer of further education (FE) colleges.

Speaking at the Lsect Spring College Data Conference, in London, Mr Davis said Ofsted was concerned with the growth in subcontracting throughout the FE sector.

Mr Davis said: "What does it look like and where are we going with that?

"We're thinking about this very, very carefully."

He later added: "We are very worried."

Karl Bentley, lead funding auditor at RSM Tenon, followed Mr Davis onto the platform and shared some tough love advice on subcontracting.

As part of his presentation Mr Bentley said general FE colleges need to start asking subcontractors much more difficult questions as part of due diligence.

He said: "Due diligence is not collecting a load of paperwork and sticking it in a lever arch file.

"Due diligence is when you actually look at that paperwork and check that you are satisfied with it."

Mr Bentley questioned delegates about how they carried out due diligence on subcontractors, as well as how much of their own digging they did regarding the firm's track record with previous prime/lead providers.

He also stressed that more staff needed to start visiting subcontractors for themselves in order to see if they were operating correctly.

"It's actually going out there, getting off your backside, going into those buildings and having a look at stuff."

He added that the most important tactic colleges could use was to make sure they didn't "believe the hype" or any of the "propaganda" offered by some subcontractors.

"Do your due diligence properly and ask those difficult questions. That's all you can do... just don't believe the hype." Mr Bentley said

He later added: "If someone comes in and they absolutely believe their own propaganda, saying 'we're brilliant, we've got these massive success rates, and we've got this and that'.

"Start asking a few more difficult questions and see how much they squirm - if they can answer the questions well brilliant, fine.

"The auditor will be happy as well because you've done your proper due diligence."

Mr Bentley also made the point that as an auditor he typically only sees the subcontracting arrangements that have gone wrong.

Nick Linford, managing director of Lsect, managing editor of *FE Week* and the conference chair, agreed with Mr Bentley and said it was the duty of college data staff to examine the data from subcontractors and watch out for any warning signs.

Mr Linford said: "Often you will know, as individuals, that when you see the data and you

suddenly get 100 enrolment forms from standing start that things don't seem right.

"In a sense you are partly there with your experience I would say to provide those warning signals to the senior managers. You are in quite a privileged position and you can often spot those first signs."

Mr Bentley warned that the repercussions of poor subcontracting arrangements were not to be taken lightly.

"At the end of the day it's public money and if it all goes belly up, you guys will get it in the neck," Mr Bentley said.

"You get it in the neck because the SFA will come along, or the YPLA, and take all of their money off you and then you're left to try and get your money off your partners through the courts."

The Lsect Spring Data Conference included a morning session by Lisa Macdougall, data specification manager at the Information Authority (IA).

This included a summary of the key changes to the 2012/13 Individualised Learner Record (ILR), which has no flat file ILR specification for 2012/13 and no conversion facility in the Learner Information Suite (LIS).

Other changes to the ILR include the removal of three fields and the addition of two new fields, including one for higher education (HE), as well as new codes in the learner funding and monitoring for learner support and 19+ discretionary support funds.

Lisa Macdougall also used the conference to explain the approach to funding and data collection for the 2013/14 academic year.

The goal, she said, would be to deliver less burdensome data collection as a result of simplified funding, with an annual drive to remove fields in the ILR.

Other speakers at the event included Ellie Frazier, data quality and assurance manager at the Data Service, who looked at how the current data systems would be supported for the final year of the existing funding methodology, as well as how they would be changed for the 2013/14 'roll-over'.

Carole Morley, head of development and support at the Learning Records Service, was quick to highlight the improvements to the LRS Organisation Portal and promote the 14.5 million Unique Learner Numbers (ULN) issued during her morning presentation.

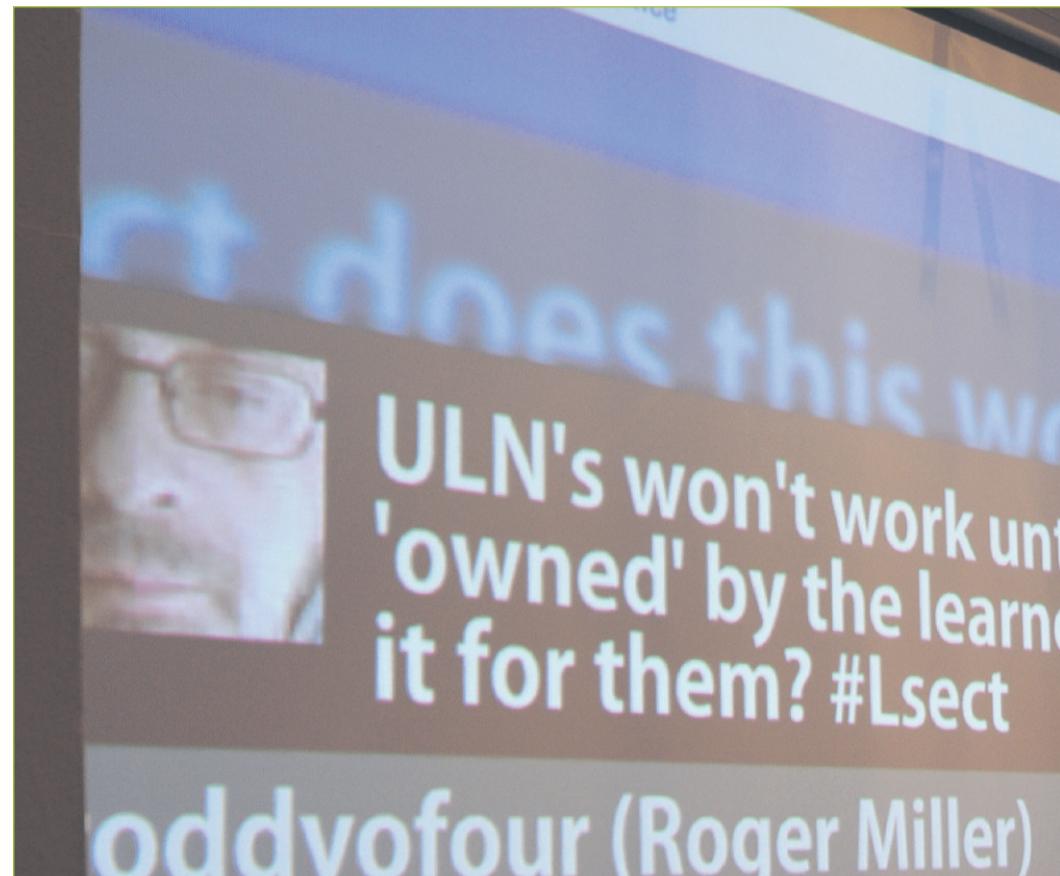
However, delegates tweeted using the hash tag '#Lsect' to voice their concerns on the conference Twitter fountain.

Rob Elliot (@capitafhe) tweeted: "14.5m ULN's create but how many learners are actively accessing their PLR's?"

Rob Clark (@rjclarkcapita) added: "My better half enrolled at local #FurtherEd College and asked me 'what's a ULN?' - is there a problem in awareness?"

Exhibitors at the event included Capita, the Data Service, Corero, the Information Authority, Drake Lane Associates and Perspectives.

Delegates had the chance to network at the venue, discuss the presentations with one another and speak with exhibitors at length about their products or services.



An additional screen projected a twitter fountain, publishing live comments and thoughts from deleg



Lisa Macdougall, Data Specification Manager, the IA

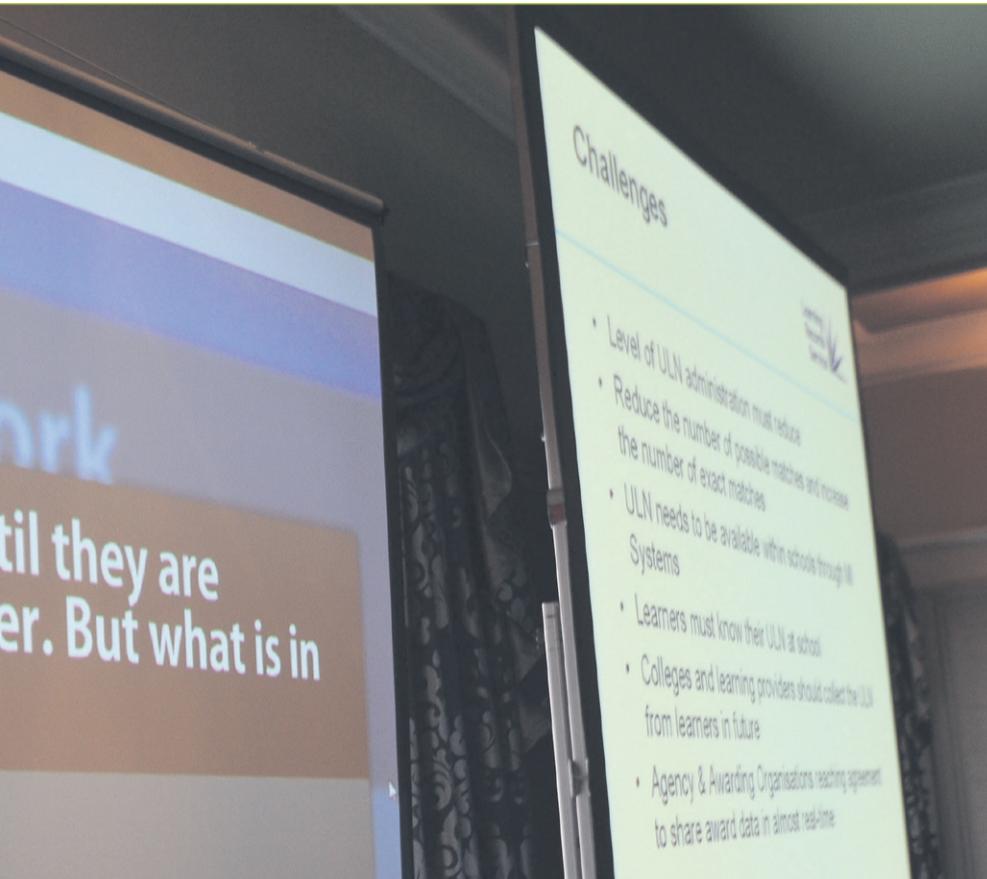


Ellie Frazier, Data Quality Manager



The Grand Connaught Rooms in London hosted the Lsect Spring College Data Conference, which was

Learning College Data Conference



The data conference provided lots of opportunity to ask questions (above and below)

ates and non-attendees that tweeted with the hash-tag #lsect



Carole Morley, Head of Deployment, Learning Records Service



Nick Linford, Managing Director, Lsect



Karl Bentley, Lead Auditor, RSM Tenon



Mike Davis, Principal Officer, Ofsted

fully-booked and attended by 180 staff eager for news on changes to college data and funding

FE Week events...

Talent search at the AoC HR Conference

Nick Reinis**@fenickr**

Leadership and unearthing talent are two of the big issues for staff who work in the further education sector.

But with the right management and direction staff can prosper - not just inside a college, but for the sector as a whole.

That was the sentiment of Matt Atkinson, principal of City of Bath College, as he took to the platform at the Association of Colleges' (AoC) Human Resources Conference and Exhibition 2012, in Birmingham, last Tuesday.

Mr Atkinson said the sector does not approach talent management "particularly well".

He added: "Part of my job is to develop people, not only for the college, but for the sector as a whole.

"People will disagree, but I'm really pleased if someone has been through our programme and goes on (to another college) to do very well."

When first arriving at the college, Mr Atkinson said he conducted a staff survey

"Total college income last year was £7.7 billion of which £5 billion was spent on staff. This is not an easy task"

which found a lack of ambition in the organisation.

"People didn't feel comfortable to be ambitious," he said.

However, he also unearthed "hidden talent" and a "huge gulf between senior staff and staff on the ground" which needed to be fixed.

But he said the issues are not confined to his college.

"I think it's fair to say that our sector has leadership issues. I'm not convinced that there is a huge talent pool available.

"I think we've got some good people. But, how many of us have sat through interviews and felt thoroughly depressed?" he questioned.

To combat this, he and the college "worked hard to develop our own solution" in the form of a talent management programme, Aspire to Leadership.

The aim was to spot talent and to think about succession planning, but in a selfless model to drive ambition.

It lasts 10 to 12 weeks, including career mapping, job searches, mock interviews and a "mini-management project" lasting six weeks.

Through the projects, the college has spawned innovative ideas, including their own record label, BA1 Records, and a staff member who helps students create professional Facebook profiles to aid future employability.

Mr Atkinson says they have never turned down an applicant for the programme.

"We also need some people to realise that they can't be managers. That is really important. Give them the space to fail in this space before you put people into a job where it's much, much riskier."

"We've had a couple of people who came to the end of the programme and realised they don't want to be a manager," he said.

The programme has had 54 graduates with 96 per cent completion rate - with 17 promoted, five of which outside the college.

"There is now this culture of ambition - it is okay to be ambitious in our business," he said.

With a seemingly ever-changing landscape of employment law, the AoC's event was a timely reminder of latest developments.

From latest legal frameworks, to the challenges of social media; and from latest government guidance, to new staff developments and shared services, the event's programme was packed with ideas and innovation.

Conference chair Evan Williams, director of employment and professional services

at AoC, said the economic downturn is "biting", but he also added: "However, the FE brand is getting stronger.

"We are a resilient sector and over years we have adapted to change. It's not been easy and there have been casualties.

"But we remain and continue to be strong."

And the sector needs to be strong - with more 245,000 staff at colleges, including 128,000 teachers and lecturers.

They deal with 3.3 million learners a year, which is twice as many 16-18-year-olds as there are in schools.

He added: "It is you, the HR teams, who are responsible for colleges' most important

"engaged", saying those who are not can be "incredibly destructive" to a college.

Professionalism is also key, according to Mrs McMillan, who said that "we owe it to our staff to support them" to be professional.

She said: "It really offends me when I come across people who don't think professionalism is part of what they are about and to undersell themselves.

She added: "We need to help staff achieve their potential.

"We have to help them discover that; what new things they can be doing because if they are doing that then they will do that with our students."

Mrs McMillan also gave an interesting insight into the hiring of "mavericks" and taking risks in recruitment.

She said: "Sometimes my vice-principal and I are interviewing together and say 'that's a maverick; is it a safe maverick, or not a safe maverick?'.

"Sometimes you get it right and sometimes you get it wrong, but having people who are not all cloned the same way is an important part of the process."

Later, Justin Hughes, founder and managing director of Mission Excellence, used his previous experience as a pilot for the Red Arrows to discuss working in pressurised environments.

Meanwhile, Geoffrey Mead, a partner of Eversheds LLP, who specialises in employment law, gave an update of the latest legal developments.

It included updates to the Agency Worker Regulations 2010, proposed changes to sickness and holiday laws, and a consultation by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, on possible changes to TULCRA.

The plenary sessions concluded with an emotional motivational speech from Marc Woods, a Paralympic gold medallist.

He told the audience how he had lost his left leg below the knee after a battle with cancer at the age of 17.

However, he has competed at five Paralympic Games, winning 12 medals including four golds, as well as 21 medals from the World and the European Championships.

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Evan Williams, AoC



Justin Hughes, Mission Excellence



Marc Woods, former Paralympian



Fiona McMillan, President of AoC



Matt Atkins, principal of City of Bath College speaks from the podium



Plenty of questions were asked by members of the audience

Pictures by Nick Reinis

Q&A on mock tribunal with Diane Gilhooley



What happened during the mock tribunal?

The mock employment tribunal is a very practical and highly interactive exercise. So we had the employment tribunal setting with a judge and panel members, we had a bundle of documents which set out the story, we had a respondent who was putting forward the case and we had the individual who had been dismissed. The audience were there to watch as it took place and were able to play an active role in the cross-examination."

As well as the usual plenary sessions and breakout workshops, the AoC's event also featured a practical element. The night before the conference got underway, a mock employment tribunal was held - complete with a judge, two panel members, a claimant and a respondent - at the Hilton Garden Inn Hotel in Birmingham. *FE Week* spoke to Diane Gilhooley, partner at Eversheds LLP, who organised the event, about how it went.

What scene was set for the mock tribunal?

We used an example of an individual who placed a number of comments on Facebook. They covered inappropriate comments about colleagues, management at the organisation and the college. As a result of that in this fictitious scenario, we'd taken the management decision to dismiss the individual. So the HR manager set out the reasons and the process, then a cross-examination from the audience, which was gruelling, and then the individual claimant, who set out why he thought it was grossly unfair. He was cross-examined by the representative for the respondent, the audience, the judge and two panel members.

What was the mood like for the mock

tribunal?

It was light-hearted and fun. We only had an hour-and-a-half, so it was obviously much shorter than a real employment tribunal would be. But it aimed to give the delegates a practical flavour or a topical issue; the way it would run, give them the chance to participate and see where the issued might be, and there was a judgement delivered. It was decided in a non-conventional way; firstly there was a vote taken from the audience and then the judge discussed it with the panel members to decide a likely outcome.

It's practical. It enables people to look at it and learn as they're going along so they are able to participate and think differently about the different practices and see something from the beginning to the end. So they get to see the bundle, they get to see the disciplinary hearing and the impact of their decision making on a daily basis. And then they get to see how their daily decision-making can ultimately be tested in an employment tribunal. So it's helpful learning; they learn in a safe environment, but can take the lessons of that safe environment back to work to hopefully then incorporate into their working practices.

Why did you decide to organise the mock tribunal?

FE Week campus round-up



South Nottingham College scheme awarded ultimate education accolade by The Queen

Staff and students from South Nottingham College's Balls to Poverty programme were presented the ultimate education accolade by The Queen.

The college was one of 21 prize-winning universities and further education colleges in the 'Diamond Jubilee' (ninth) biennial round of the Queen's Anniversary Prizes.

It recognises and celebrates the outstanding work within higher and further education institutions and the impact that they have.

Prize-winners were awarded with a silver gilt medal and certificate signed personally by Her Majesty the Queen.

Chair of governors Keith Beaumont,

principal Malcolm Cowgill and Balls to Poverty managing director, Joe Sargison accompanied five students who have all been involved in the programme to Buckingham Palace.

Mr Cowgill said: "Balls to Poverty was set up to tackle major social challenges at home and abroad through sports training and football.

"It has had benefits for both the volunteers involved and the children in communities in Nottingham and South Africa that it has reached.

"We are extremely proud for the college's work to be commended by this award."

Lion Awards 2012 prove a roaring success



Some of the best students and tutors in further education (FE) were recognised by City & Guilds at the Lion Awards 2012 ceremony in London last week.

The glamorous red-carpet event, which included a formal dinner at the Camden Roundhouse, was the culmination of the annual City & Guilds Medals for Excellence programme.

The awards ceremony was hosted by Alex Jones, TV personality and star of The One Show and Strictly Come Dancing, and also included an after show party.

The Lion Awards 2012 ceremony also included an announcement for the WorldSkills

UK Skills Show and an aerial artist performance in the Gallery Bar.

The award winners included Helen Yates, who was crowned tutor of the year for her work at Sussex Downs College and Adam Waldron, apprentice of the year for his experiences with Airbus.

Other winners included Nicholas Rose, recognised as FE sector learner of the year and outstanding achiever of the year; as well as Patrick Nash, lifelong learner of the year.

McDonald's was also recognised as the City & Guilds for business employer of the year, and North Lancashire Training Group received the recognition of centre excellence award.

South Cheshire College's brand new Sports Academy to produce future sporting stars



Football stars of the future can hone their skills at South Cheshire College's first-ever new Sports Academy.

The new Sports, Leadership and Coaching Academy targets students from all college courses and will give them the chance to take part in regular training sessions and matches from September.

Other sports which the Academy will deliver include volleyball, basketball and netball and students will be able to compete in the British Colleges Sports League.

Second year students and new college starters who leave school this summer will be invited to take part in trials for the

Academy from April onwards.

Graham Coffey, head of sport at the college, said: "The launch of the Academy gives all our students the opportunity to participate in a range of sports or take the opportunity to learn the ropes of a sports coach or leader.

"Previously students across the college have only had the chance to take part in sports matches and activities on Wednesday afternoons.

"However, this new Academy will become a structured part of the College week and will hopefully raise the profile of sport across the College and throughout the area."

Weston College backs young sports stars



Weston College has launched its first annual Sports Bursary Awards worth £2,500.

Five students have each been given £500 to support sport at a regional, national or international level. Sports co-ordinator Sabrina Page said: "We are delighted to launch this bursary to go towards costs of training or competing in each student's sport."

"Applicants are expected to compete throughout the year of the award and promote Weston College when training or competing as well as show they can manage their academic work."

The Sports Bursary Award winners are Lewis Mulhull, kickboxing, Adam Fisher, rugby, Jade Cope, golf, Jack Nicholson, football, and Daniel Jackson, football.



Hayes cuts ribbon at Hopwood Hall college

The minister for FE John Hayes visited Hopwood Hall College's new Middleton campus to officially open its state-of-the-art new Technology Centre.

Hopwood Hall College got the green light for a new £7 million Technology Centre at their Middleton campus in 2010, funded partly by the YPLA and partly by bank loan.

Mr Hayes cut the ceremonial ribbon and unveiled a plaque on the new building.

During his visit, he was given a tour of the Centre by Principal Derek O'Toole and student Karen Harris from the College's Student Leadership Team.

Mr Hayes said: "I am delighted to have been invited to open the new state-of-the-art Technology Centre at Hopwood Hall College which will inspire students to aim as high as they can."

Stratford-Upon-Avon College cleans up



Stratford-upon-Avon College recycled more than 1,700 cans in an inventive and unique way last week.

Students were encouraged to crush their empty drink cans and add them to a hollow statue of Greek mythological figure Icarus.

The 10ft, winged statue, provided by recycling charity Every Can Counts was situated in the college's Cultural Café.

The aim was to fill it with in a week - an aim which was successfully accomplished.

Amy Daly, from Every Can Counts, said: "It's the first time we have used Icarus in an environment other than music festivals. I'm very impressed the students have managed to fill it within a week."

The incentive has proven to be a great success as the statue received a lot of attention and even got the seal of approval from visitors

Ben Fry, student liaison co-ordinator, said: "The event proved a great success and we were delighted to have filled Icarus by the end of the week."

Lucky South Birmingham College student performs live with world class musicians

A South Birmingham College student performed live on stage with a supergroup of pop legends at a packed-out gig.

Alex Gibbs (20), from Sutton, sang Video Killed the Radio Star alongside Trevor Horn - the man who made the song a classic back in 1979 with The Buggles, and his new band.

Trevor's new band, Producers, also stars Ash Soan, drummer to artists such as Adele and CeeLo Green.

The Producers stopped at South Birmingham College to talk to music students about music and how they can make a success in the business - of which they know plenty about having more than 200 hit songs between them.

The band performed a free gig at the college's venue, the Crossing in Digbeth.

As well as playing their world famous hits such as the 10CC classic Not in Love and Tatu's All the Things She Said produced by Trevor Horn, they played a selection of new material.

Alex, who is studying HND in Popular Music Practice at the college, said: "I can't believe I have had this opportunity. To be up on stage with people like this was an amazing experience and I loved every minute."



MidKent College puts on devilish display

Demonic forces swept through MidKent College as talented students performed one of Christopher Marlowe's most controversial plays.

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus - which appalled some 17th century audiences due to its Satanic references - tells the story of a man who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for power and knowledge.

But perhaps last week's four productions proved to be too realistic, as the summoning of the devil during one performance eerily coincided with a power cut that plunged the Medway Campus theatre into darkness for more than 30 minutes.

Carole Bowles, programme area leader for performing arts, said: "It was very strange when the lights went out at that exact moment.

"But the audience were enjoying the show so much that they were more than happy to wait until the power came back on.

"The students and staff discussed how to make the play relevant to a contemporary audience and I think they did a fantastic job."



Amir Khan takes the gloves off to open Salford City College's new boxing gym

World boxing champion Amir Khan was the guest of honour at the opening of Salford City College's Walkden Sixth Form Centre Boxing Gym.

Khan has a strong affiliation with Salford City College after working in partnership together for two-and-a-half years.

The college has utilised the facilities at Khan's Bolton-based boxing gym, Gloves Community Centre, to teach college students sports lessons and enrichment.

This partnership led to Khan and Gloves generously donating an entire selection of top of the range boxing equipment to Walkden Sixth Form Centre.

Khan said: "I'm extremely proud to have

helped to develop the boxing gym at Salford City College, and to be able to provide opportunities for students and members of the wider community to get involved in the sport.

"It's a brilliant gym, with great facilities, I'm really happy we could be involved in this project."

Phil Arbelo-Dolan, sports development manager at the college, said: "Without the help and support Salford City College has received from Amir and the team down at Gloves, us having our own boxing gym would be merely a pipe dream.

"We are extremely grateful for their generous donation and hope to continue our partnership going forwards."

Gateshead College named one of Britain's best Not for Profit Organisations to work for



For the third year in a row, Gateshead College has been named among Britain's 100 Best Not for Profit Organisations to Work For, after its commitment to its employees has achieved national recognition.

It is the only college in the North East to make The Sunday Times Best Not for Profit Organisations to Work For 2012 survey and is one of 10 North East regional organisations to feature.

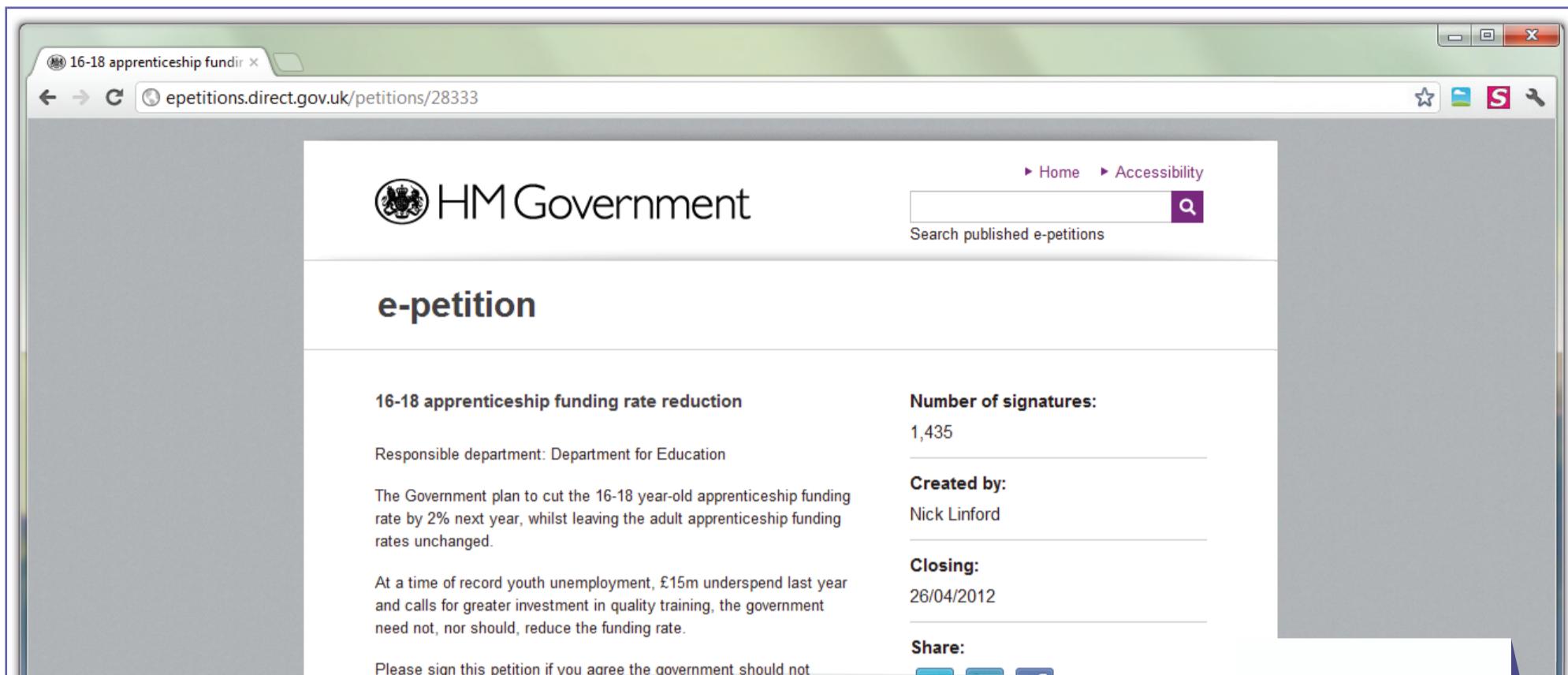
Principal Richard Thorold said: "We want Gateshead College to be the employer of choice,

so it's vital to gauge how employees feel about working here.

He added: "Having an engaged workforce is key to business success, when times are hard it is even more important to take care of your people, they are our most important asset and it is this which will give us our advantage.

"The survey reaffirms that we are doing the right things and doing them well.

"However, we won't be resting on our laurels as we will continue to look at areas which can be improved."



JOIN THE FIRST EVER FE WEEK CAMPAIGN

AGAINST A 16-18 APPRENTICESHIP FUNDING RATE REDUCTION

If you want to sign FE Week's e-petition to say 'No' to a funding rate reduction for 16-18 Apprenticeships go online to:

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/28333>

And click on 'Sign this petition' at the bottom of the page

Our e-petition reads as follows:

16-18 apprenticeship funding rate reduction

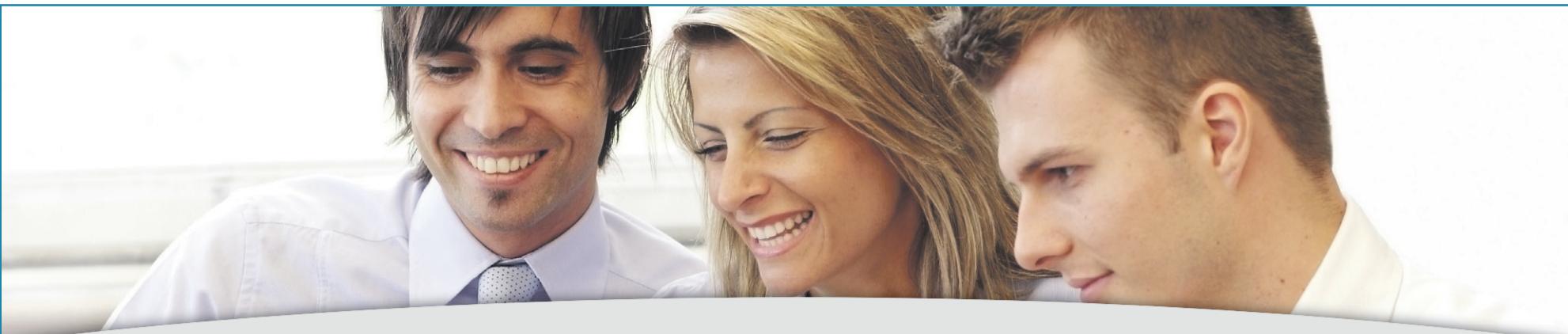
Responsible department: Department for Education

The Government plan to cut the 16-18 year-old apprenticeship funding rate by 2% next year, whilst leaving the adult apprenticeship funding rates unchanged.

At a time of record youth unemployment, £15m underspend last year and calls for greater investment in quality training, the government need not, nor should, reduce the funding rate.

Please sign this petition if you agree the government should not reduce the funding rate for 16-18 apprenticeships.





Ascentis is an established Awarding Organisation recognised by Ofqual and also an established Access Validating Agency recognised by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, creating valuable, cutting edge qualifications for FE Colleges, Training Providers, Schools, Employers and many other organisations both in the UK and overseas. Ascentis is based in Lancaster, a historic vibrant university city, rich in cultural heritage and within easy reach of the motorway. Further information can be found at our website, www.ascentis.co.uk.

Senior Manager for Access to HE

Salary £32,278

This is a full time position based in the Directorate of Regulation and Quality Assurance. The successful candidate will report to the Deputy Chief Executive, ensuring that Ascentis meets the standards required by the Company and the regulatory authorities with respect to its strategic objectives relating to the quality assurance of its Access to HE programmes.

You will be passionate about Access to Higher Education & will work with the Deputy Chief Executive to:

- Drive and support Ascentis' AVA movement;
- Inform and manage the Access to HE strategy;
- Lead on all aspects of quality assurance for Access to HE;
- Contribute to and manage compliance with regulatory requirements for Access to HE;
- Represent Ascentis at local, regional and national events relating to Access to HE, including external events.

You will line manage the performance of the Access to HE Quality Assurance Manager. You will be able to demonstrate excellent people management and leadership skills and have experience of project management. You will be educated to degree level or equivalent and have relevant experience in this field.

You will manage the Access to HE budget and contribute to corporate targets relating to risk management and business continuity. (These responsibilities provide a general overview of the post and are not exhaustive.)

- To discuss this post further, please contact Kath Fanning on **01524 845046**.
- To apply please visit the Ascentis website at www.ascentis.co.uk for an application form and job description.
- **Deadline for receipt of applications:** 4pm, 13th April 2012.

2 x Marketing and Sales Managers

Salary £24,246

Ascentis is seeking two talented and enthusiastic individuals to join our growing company in promoting and marketing an extensive portfolio of qualifications.

Through gaining a good understanding of our products, you will promote Ascentis qualifications at a variety of internal and external events throughout the UK, visit education providers to promote Ascentis' products, engage in telemarketing activities and take forward new business initiatives.

You should be a good team worker and project manager with excellent interpersonal, organisational and presentation skills. You should be educated to degree or equivalent level.

If you have a flair for marketing and sales and are interested in joining a forward-looking company we would be pleased to hear from you.

- To discuss this post further please contact Fiona Lugiano on **01524 845046**
- To apply please visit the Ascentis website at www.ascentis.co.uk for an application form and full job description.
- **Deadline for receipt of applications:** 4pm, 13th April 2012.

Grade 7 Senior Development Manager

Salary £32,278

This is a full time position based in the Directorate of Research and Development. The successful candidate will have responsibility for the work undertaken by the examination and testing service; overseeing projects involving the development and maintenance of the full range of Ascentis products including; qualifications, assessment papers and learning materials.

You should be able to demonstrate excellent people management and leadership skills and have experience of project management to proactively lead a team of Development Managers and the Examinations and Testing Unit. You should be educated to degree level or equivalent.

Responsibilities:

- Line management responsibility for a number of Development Managers and a Team Leader.
- Oversee the work of the qualification development and examination and testing functions.
- Informing the strategic planning of product development keeping abreast of relevant policies and initiatives and public funding available for qualifications.
- Proactive identification of business opportunities, including partnerships, collaborations, new qualifications, learning support materials and related products supporting the Development Managers in taking these forward.

These responsibilities provide a general overview of the post and are not exhaustive.

- To discuss this post further, please contact Chris Atkinson on **01524 845046**.
- To apply please visit the Ascentis website at www.ascentis.co.uk for an application form and job description.
- **Deadline for receipt of applications:** 4pm, 13th April 2012.

Grade 6 Development Manager

Salary £26,756

Ascentis is seeking an individual to join our enthusiastic and committed team of Development Managers engaged in the work of managing development projects.

This is a full time position based in our Directorate of Research and Development. You will manage a number of projects involving the development and maintenance of Ascentis products including; qualifications, assessment papers and learning materials. You will engage with clients, external partners and liaise with other departments within Ascentis in particular the sales and marketing team.

We would be particularly interested in candidates that have curriculum experience within the fields of Education and Training and/or Access to Higher Education.

You should be a good team worker and project manager and be able to manage a number of projects concurrently. You should be educated to degree or equivalent level.

If you have a flair for curriculum development and are interested in joining a forward-looking company we would be pleased to hear from you.

- To discuss this post further please contact Chris Atkinson on **01524 845046**
- To apply please visit the Ascentis website at www.ascentis.co.uk for an application form and job description.
- **Deadline for receipt of applications:** 4pm, 13th April 2012.





GRIMSBY INSTITUTE GROUP

Managing Director Commercial / Workforce Development (Ref: G151)

Salary: Circa £55,000 per annum

Hours: Full time

Contract type: Permanent

These are challenging times but ones of real opportunity for a commercially minded person. This key Managing Director role will appeal to an outstanding business leader with strong commercial, operational and managerial skills. The successful candidate will have a proven track record in delivering sustainable growth through commercial and market development strategies with a portfolio of commercial success.

This position will provide an excellent opportunity for a driven individual to grow the Institute's full cost and non-government funded activity. The successful applicant will work to attract income and re-invest in the Institute's future through pioneering partnerships that enable the Institute to deliver market growth. The candidate will increase and diversify income sources from commercial activity including developing and leading on an outstanding curriculum offer. The postholder will direct the development of innovative services, generating income through meeting the needs of employers in key sectors including apprenticeships, work based learning, consultancy, research, short professional and bespoke courses.

Download an application form at:www.grimsby.ac.uk/vacancies**Closing Date: Friday 23rd March 2012**

For more job listings go to:
feweek.co.uk

and click on 'recruitment'



AIMING FOR EXCELLENCE

Haringey Sixth Form Centre**Head of Faculty - Business and ICT.****Leadership Spine 8 - 10 £51,611 - £53,894***School Teachers' Conditions of Service.*

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a dynamic and highly motivated curriculum leader to join the Senior Leadership Team of this innovative and successful urban Sixth Form Centre.

Reporting to the Assistant Principal – Curriculum, we want to appoint an inspirational leader with an outstanding track record of team building, management and student achievement.

The candidate appointed will be a fully qualified talented teacher, a business specialist, but with knowledge of ICT – a background in accounts or economics would be particularly attractive. You will be responsible for the strategic direction of the Faculty, one of the largest in the Centre, and for the operational management of a team of twelve teachers, three of whom have middle management responsibilities. Your focus will be on the improvement of teaching, learning and pastoral support to raise student retention and achievement. This is a challenging position that offers huge rewards for someone with the ability to inspire teachers, motivate students and who can thrive in a richly diverse educational environment.

If you would like a discussion regarding this post, please call 020 8376 5901.

Closing date: noon 22 March 2012

Interviews: 29 March 2012

Download the application pack from our website.
Alternatively:
E: jobs@haringey6.ac.uk **T:** 020 8376 5877

Haringey Sixth Form Centre

White Hart Lane Tottenham
London N17 8HR
Tel: 020 8376 6000

www.haringey6.ac.uk**DIOCESE OF BATH & WELLS****Changing Lives, Changing Churches for Changing Communities**

The Diocese of Bath & Wells is seeking to appoint an exceptional and inspiring leader to have strategic responsibility for the Diocese's work with Schools/Academies, Colleges and Universities; and work with children and young people in Parishes and Deaneries.

You will lead the experienced Education Department and support the Board of Education in the development and implementation of its strategic policy.

The Board of Education priorities are:

- Raising standards in Church Schools/Academies
- Responding to new patterns of school organisation
- Developing broader Christian experiences for children & young people
- Building on the high standards of service and support provided

Director of Education**Starting salary: £62,000**

Permanent, Full-time | Required from September 2012

Defined Contribution Pension Scheme | Relocation expenses available

To be successful you will have:

- Senior leadership experience in education
- The ability to engage and build strong relationships at all levels
- An understanding of the structures and culture of the Church of England
- A vision and passion for the Church's work in schools/academies, chaplaincies and informal settings with children and young people

An Occupational Requirement exists for the post-holder to be a practising Christian of a denomination which is a member of Churches Together in England.

An enhanced CRB Disclosure will be required for the successful candidate.

Further information and an application pack can be downloaded from <http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/diocese/vacancies/9/> or contact **Maria Webber** at Maria.Webber@bathwells.anglican.org or **01749 685113**

Closing date: Wednesday 11th April 2012 by 12 noon**Interviews: 25th and 26th April 2012**



Qube learning

MIS Manager

£35,000 pa

Qube Learning is a successful business that delivers work-based learning programmes through government-funded qualifications and commercial training across England.

We are looking for a dynamic Management Information Systems Manager to lead and inspire Qube's Data and Information Team including the Awarding Organisation Coordinator.

Reporting to the Finance Director, core responsibilities will be:

- Information team management
- Awarding organisation management
- Monthly data submission
- Compliance and data integrity
- Quality assurance
- Funding information, advice and guidance

Candidates must have demonstrable team management skills and a proven track record of working to LSC / SFA contracts underpinned by an in-depth understanding of SFA funding. Experience of using DSATS and LIS is essential.

For further information and a job description please contact Sally Connolly on 01235 833838 or sally.connolly@qube-learning.co.uk

Closing Date: 31st March



UNLOCK THEIR POTENTIAL...

Principal

£competitive & relocation allowance

We're proud of what we've achieved here at Shrewsbury College. Committed to providing the widest range of vocational education, we have solid finances and continue to invest in our estate. Our high aspirations for the future require an inspirational leader to take us forward.

Our recent Ofsted report identified areas of good provision but we are committed to ensuring that everything we do is good or outstanding. We want to build on our good relationships with key partners and to anticipate and meet the needs of the communities we serve. With learners and partners spread across a rurally dispersed area, raising the profile of the college is a priority for us.

As a strong and visible leader you will engage confidently with students, colleagues and external stakeholders. With proven experience of establishing and maintaining high levels of performance across a broad vocational curriculum, financial acumen, an excellent knowledge of the FE sector and the ability to produce an inspiring and sustainable vision for the future of Shrewsbury College, this is an excellent opportunity to make a real difference and for significant professional rewards.

...And yours

To find out more visit www.scprincipal.co.uk contact Mike Galloway on 07765 595758 or Trudy Searle on 07791 090141. Closing date: 12 April.


SHREWSBURY COLLEGE
OF ARTS & TECHNOLOGY

If you want to advertise a job with *FE Week* call 020 8123 4891 or email chardelle.mason@feweek.co.uk

MAKE DREAMS REAL

Walsall College is one of the largest further education colleges in the West Midlands, employing 736 staff and with an annual turnover of £35 million. We are a dynamic institution with a reputation for innovation, excellence and for our serious engagement with local schools and employers together with public and private sector partners. The College has a lot to celebrate; a new £64million campus, increased enrolments, we are in the top 10% for success rates in the country for 16-18 year old learners on level 3 courses, two Beacon Awards, as well as the sponsorship of the new Black Country University Technical College and The Mirus Academy.



Vice Principal Business and Partnerships

Salary: Competitive package

In this key, newly formed position, the right individual will strengthen the position of Walsall College as a centre of educational aspiration in its locality and beyond. Demonstrable senior management experience, combined with a national reputation for partnership delivery across a number of education sectors, will help you to set ambitious targets that contribute to the development of sustainable business streams and the future success of the College. If your strategic and senior management experience has also provided visionary leadership for both academic and business support staff, we would love to hear from you.

You probably have experience of setting up new education based organisations and you want to initiate opportunities for new partnership activity in the UK and internationally.

You have a track record of growing income through innovation, research and enterprise collaborations and as Vice Principal Partnerships you can seek new progression routes, new markets and new opportunities and work with a Deputy Principal who has the curriculum expertise and quality background to complement your success.

For further details and to apply online please visit www.walsallcollege.ac.uk or call 01922 651177.

Walsall College is passionate about promoting equality of opportunity and creating a working environment where diversity is recognised and celebrated and everyone has the chance to reach their full potential. Our environment is diverse in character and student population. We particularly welcome applications from candidates from Black Minority Ethnic origin and those with a disability. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people/vulnerable adults is at the heart of all we do. This is reflected in our rigorous approach to the recruitment and professional development of our staff.





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Celebrating 20 years of ...

- service to industry
- highly valued industry qualifications
- quality, service and support
- industry excellence
- informing the skills agenda

EAL celebrates 20 years of awarding industry skills with the launch of Careers in industry on the 21st March 2012

...get inspired

discover how you can make it in industry...

www.careersinindustry.co.uk



FE Week Sudoku challenge

				6	9	5		
4		7						
2		5		3	8			1
3				4	2	8	9	
	2	3	7	1	4			
5	6	4	8			3		
1	3	9		8		4		
				7		6		
4	5	2						

Difficulty:
EASY

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

9			2				5	
5	8	1		9	2			4
	8		5					
6				8				
2		5			6			
9				4				
	9	8						
4	7	2	3	5			1	
2		7					8	

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

Last Week's solutions

4	1	9	2	8	7	6	3	5
7	5	6	3	1	4	9	8	2
3	2	8	5	6	9	4	1	7
8	6	3	1	7	2	5	9	4
5	9	4	6	3	8	2	7	1
2	7	1	4	9	5	3	6	8
9	3	2	7	5	1	8	4	6
1	8	5	9	4	6	7	2	3
6	4	7	8	2	3	1	5	9

Difficulty:
EASY

2	6	5	3	1	9	4	7	8
8	9	7	2	5	4	6	3	1
3	4	1	7	8	6	9	5	2
9	7	2	6	4	5	1	8	3
1	8	4	9	2	3	7	6	5
6	5	3	8	7	1	2	4	9
7	1	9	4	3	8	5	2	6
4	3	6	5	9	2	8	1	7
5	2	8	1	6	7	3	9	4

Difficulty:
MEDIUM

FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of FE Week's biggest and smallest fan!



“Mostly this week I have been having fun on the slide”

You can also follow our FE Week mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford